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FROM : Amembassy RABAT

DATE: April 15, 1966

SUBJECT: Reactions to Franco-Israeli Arms Purchase Accord

REF : Paris' A-1904 to Department, March 30, 1966

The United States is an occasional target of criticism in the militantly pro-Arab Istiqlal press for its policy toward Israel. On April 5, however, the Istiqlal's Arabic daily "Al Alam" carried a front page item taking France to task for the recently concluded Franco-Israeli arms agreement. While often inaccurate on details, "Al Alam" is Morocco's most widely read Arabic daily (circulation 30,000).

After recounting the development of Franco-Arab relations through the 1950's, including Suez, the article expressed disappointment that the recent exchanges of visits between France and Arab countries do not appear to presage a general improvement in Franco-Arab relations. The manufacture in Israel of certain military components for France reflects, "Al Alam" continued, DeGaulle's unwillingness to rely on American arms. In a final comment the article spoke of an "unwritten alliance" between France and Israel, aimed at enhancing stability in the eastern Mediterranean where France seeks to protect its private interests.

For the Ambassador:

William R. Crawford

William R. Crawford, Jr.
Counselor for Political Affairs

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